



FEDERATED STATES
OF
MICRONESIA

ADDRESS

BY

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SECRETARY (MINISTER)

OF THE

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

OF THE

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

BEFORE THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

AT ITS

FIFTY-NINTH SESSION

NEW YORK, 29 SEPTEMBER 2004

MR. PRESIDENT,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Heads of States and Governments,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen:

I am honored by the opportunity to speak before the fifty-ninth Session of the General Assembly on behalf of the people of my Pacific Island nation, the Federated States of Micronesia, and on behalf of our President, His Excellency, Joseph J. Urusemal.

Allow me to extend my congratulations, Mr. President, on your well-deserved election to this high office. I would also like to recognize Mr. Julian Robert Hunte of Saint Lucia, for his distinguished service as President of the Fifty-Eighth Session.

Sadly, Mr. President, there have been so many recent disasters in which innocent lives have been lost, that

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Mr. President:

[UN roles in social progress and the environment]

Even if we summon up the will to act collectively to put down the darker side of human nature through collective action, we must work much harder and on a global scale to move toward eliminating the conditions that provide fertile ground in which the sponsors of terrorism and genocide are able to prosper. These include conditions of poverty, hunger, and inadequate access to clean water, sanitation, health care and education. All these, of course, are familiar topics to students of the United Nations Charter. Thanks

Mr. President:

There are several issues of concern to my country on which, briefly, I would like to be more specific.

[Mauritius Conference — January 2005]

First, Micronesia keenly anticipates the convening of the International Meeting on Small Island Developing States in January 2005, in Mauritius. This will be the critical ten-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action, which focuses on the particular needs and vulnerabilities of small island developing states as we pursue sustainable development.

During the past ten years we have seen progress in implementing the Programme of Action, with the close involvement and support of the UN Secretariat. However, progress needs to be accelerated. The International Meeting will enable us to identify and make essential course corrections. Naturally, over ten years time we have also seen the emergence of new challenges, and issues not originally addressed. These can also now be considered. Overall, the outcomes of the International Meeting should be target oriented, so that progress in implementing the Programme of Action can be tracked and measured.

Of course, the International Meeting will be successful only if island States representatives are enabled to attend. Micronesia thus calls upon the donor community to provide generous support to the Trust Fund, so that island States may be adequately represented at the Meeting. In that regard I must acknowledge and express appreciation to those countries who have already contributed.

Developing country partners and developed countries should also make every effort to be represented at the highest possible political level, to ensure that the International Meeting receives the political support it needs, for effective implementation of its outcomes.

Mr. President:

[climate change]

Perhaps foremost among our vulnerabilities in Micronesia, along with other members of the Alliance of Small Island States, is our extreme exposure to the adverse effects of global climate change.

For more than a decade now, we have been vocal in this Body and elsewhere, on just about every aspect of the Climate Change issue. There is one side of it that gives me increasing concern as the debate evolves beyond whether climate change is real, to what should be done about it. This has to do with environmental ethics.

In Micronesia, as in most of the island States, our people have a tradition of living in harmony with Nature. Consequently, our ecological "footprint" has been small. While we in the islands can and need to do more to curb unsustainable practices, it is clear that we have contributed little to the climate crisis, and that we can contribute little to its solution. Yet, we are among the first to be affected and even face possible extinction.

For the populations of low-lying small islands, however, practical options are few. Land in the islands is in short supply in the best of times, and it has long been taken. Contrary to romantic fantasy, there are no deserted islands available. Populations already tend to be concentrated. Previous efforts to relocate island populations have brought suffering and cultural loss to the people concerned. To those of us faced

Mr. President:

[support for RMI nuclear claims]

As neighbors and fellow islanders, we have saddened by the inability of the people of the Republic of Marshall Islands, after almost fifty years, to secure full compensation for the death, sickness and destruction suffered by them as a consequence of nuclear weapons testing. Recently declassified documents make it clear that original settlements were not based on the full story of what happened to the Marshallese people, and other peoples of the former Trust Territory as well. We join other Members in calling upon the United States to meet its responsibility in full.